

## **Unit One: Launching the Writer's Workshop**

### **A Possible Sequence of Mini-lessons**

- Day 1:** Writers think of something important that has happened to them, and then show it in their pictures and words.
- Day 2:** Writers write about things that happen to them.
- Day 3:** What writers do when they think they are done; carrying on independently as writers.
- Day 4:** Writers use and take care of tools they need.
- Day 5:** Setting up Table Monitors
- Day 6:** Writers tell their stories through their illustrations.
- Day 7:** Writers put details into their illustrations
- Day 8:** Writers write for longer periods of time. (Increasing stamina)
- Day 9:** Writers draw the best they can and keep going.
- Day 10:** Writers get a picture in their mind before they write.
- Day 11:** Writers use pictures *and* words to tell their stories.
- Day 12:** Writers say each word slowly and write down the sounds they hear.
- Day 13:** Writers spell the best they can and keep going.
- Day 14:** Using writing tools: The Alphabet Chart
- Day 15:** Writers can decide to go back to pieces to add more. (Using their folders)
- Day 16:** Introducing booklets
- Day 17:** Writers plan what they will write by touching each page and saying what will go there.
- Day 18:** Writers fix up their writing for readers.
- Day 19:** Writers make their writing fancy when they publish.
- Day 20:** Writers celebrate their publications. Unit of Study:

Title of Mini-lesson:

Materials:

Connection:

Teaching

Active Engagement

Link:

Share:

## Unit of Study: Launching the Writer's Workshop

Title of Mini-lesson: Lesson 1 - Writers Write about Something Important That Has Happened to Them

### Materials:

- Copies of books that have been read to students earlier in the day
- Chart paper
- Markers
- Tape
- Paper for students to write on
- Pencils

Connection: Explain that every day students will work in a writers workshop and that it will always begin with a meeting. Share that they will become writers just like the ones who write the books that are read in the classroom.

Teaching: Show how writers go about choosing a topic they know and care about. Think aloud. Highlight the kind of thinking that the students will hopefully do. The mini lesson should last from about 7- 10 minutes but no longer than 10 minutes ever. Keep the mini-lesson specific and quick. Do not try to teach everything in one lesson. The teacher says: "Watch what I do when I write. Hmmm. What should I write about?" The teacher thinks aloud of the possibilities that she could use starting with topic that she knows little about and rejects that idea. "I could write about racing. But I don't know much about that. I could write about using the computer, but I don't know much about that." Then she points out that she does not want to write about something that she does not know much about. "I don't want to write about anything that I do not know much about."

The teacher asks rhetorical questions and answers them herself. It could go like this - The teacher could say, "What will I write about? I know what I will write about. I know a lot about cooking pancakes. I cook pancakes for my family every weekend. This past Saturday, I cooked pancakes and my family put strawberries and Cool Whip on top of their pancakes."

The teacher should show how she is thinking about her story. She makes her sketch simple. The teacher shows the whole idea and then separates it into parts.

The teacher should have chart paper and marker ready.

Teacher: "Hmmm. Let me draw my story. Hmmm. What will I sketch? I need to think about my story."

"On Saturday, I cooked a lot of pancakes for my family. They put strawberries on top of their stacks of pancakes. Then they scooped out big spoonfuls of Cool Whip. What will I sketch first? I will start with the pancakes on a plate. What will I sketch next? I will sketch the strawberries on the pancakes. I will sketch the Cool Whip container. I will sketch the spoon with a big scoop of Cool Whip. I will draw me and my family: my daughter, my son and my husband." The teacher quickly sketches what is needed to tell her story.

Label the parts that are important to the story. Expect students to try even if they do not know enough about graphophonics to do as the teacher does.

Teacher labels the most important parts of her sketch; for example, pancakes, the Cool Whip, the strawberries and her family members. She is quick and does not labor the spelling. Teaching students how to stretch words will come later.

Active Engagement: Have students close their eyes. Have students think of something that they have done recently or something that they do often. After a moment, have students open their eyes and tell someone sitting next to them what they might write about (This is called turn and talk).

At some point, students will be put in more permanent partnerships. As students share with someone, the teacher crouches low and listens to several different sets of partners. This sets the stage for expectations of later lessons.

Link: Let students know that they will be doing what the teacher did at their writing spot. Share that they will be doing this today and everyday during writer's workshop.

Share: Have students hold their work up for all in the room to see. Praise and celebrate. Gather students again at the carpet and recognize one or two students' accomplishments specifically identifying what the students did.

"Wow! As I was going around the room, I noticed that a lot of students were able to think of a story and sketch it. Some of you were able to label the important parts. This is wonderful! I would like to share Emily's writing for today. Look at what Emily did... She... I would like for you to do this too. Writers I would like for you to do this everyday that you write."

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Title of Mini-lesson: Lesson 2 - Thinking of Something Important to Write

Materials: chart paper, tape, student writing paper, and pencils for students, and teacher's own notebook with teacher made entries written ahead of time

Connection: "Yesterday you wrote about something that was important to you. That's what writers do. Writers write about something important to them. Today you will think in your mind about something that is important to you and write about it."

Teaching: The teacher's objective is to have students observe her thinking aloud and sketching. The teacher will repeat much of what was done in the preceding. "What could I write about? I could write about swimming but I haven't been swimming this year. Writers don't write about things that they do not know much about. I could write about jumping on our trampoline in our backyard last weekend. Why would I write about that? I can remember that very clearly. I can remember jumping up and down holding my daughter's hand. What can I see in my mind? I can picture it in my mind like I was watching a movie. I can see us jumping up in the air. What could I sketch? I could sketch the trampoline. I could sketch my daughter holding my hand. She was laughing so I could draw her with a smile. I was laughing also so I could draw me with a smile. I could label me. Mmm-"M". Me starts with "M". Then it has an "E". Then I could write "Emily" I hear a "M". I hear "E" - Emily."

Active Engagement: The teacher has students close their eyes and picture something that they know about. The teacher provides a few suggestions that would be relevant to her students. Then the teacher has students turn and talk. (Partners have not been permanently assigned so this may take longer than it will in the future.) Have students choose who will go first. The first person will share while the other person listens. (In future lessons, the teacher will focus on expectations for "Turn and Talk".) Remember to direct the second partner to share. The teacher listens to several different partners. She may choose to share what she overheard. She then directs students to get paper, pencils, and personal writing place. Students write independently while she confers.

Link: Teacher says "Students, when you go to your personal writing space, you will sketch your story and label just like I did. You can do this anytime you write after you think of your story." She then directs students to get paper, pencils, and personal writing place. Students write while she confers.

Share: During conferring the teacher is looking for examples of something to share that the students are doing that would benefit the other students. During the time that students gather again on the rug again, she shares that observation.

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Title of Mini-lesson: Lesson 3 - What do you do when you think that you are done?

Materials: Chart entitled "What to Do When You Think that You Are Done", a student's piece of writing with drawing and labeling or sentences, writing that the teacher did at the previous writing session, writing in the middle of each writing space, student's folders laid out at their writing spots with the previous session's piece of writing for each student.

Connection: The teacher reminds students of the procedures that they have followed to "write a story". "For the last two days of writing, we have thought about something that we know about, we have pictured it in our minds, and we have sketched it on paper. Then we labeled it. Today during our mini-lesson, I am going to show you how writers decide if they are finished with a piece of writing. Your job is to sit and listen so you will know what you are to do when you are writing on your own."

Teaching: In this session the teacher will spend more time telling the story that she has "written" the day before by sharing more important details. The teacher's goal is to help writers stretch beyond when they consider themselves finished. This gives the teacher more time to confer. The teacher points to her writing from the day before and has students look at it. "Pretend it was yesterday, and I am just finishing my story. Watch what I do when I am done with my writing." The teacher points to a place on her drawing that she could add a relevant detail. "What could I put here that would make my story say more? Oh, I know. My husband and son were watching me and my daughter as we were jumping on our trampoline. That is important. Writers include important details. I need to add my husband in my sketch. He was laughing also. Then I need to add my son. I could write their names. I could write a sentence about them laughing at us. Writers add details about their story."

The teacher then shares a student's example, breaking down the important details in the sketch that were left out. She also may have the student get another piece of paper because the first sketch made the student think about something else that needs a different piece of writing paper.

Share the "When I Think I Am Done" Chart. It should include: Add to the picture, Add to the words, Start a new piece.

Active Engagement: The teacher should ask students to imagine that they have finished their writing. "Writers, I want you to close your eyes and imagine you are just finishing your writing. You may say "I am done!" You look at your writing and you think "Can I add more to my picture? Add more words? Do I need to get more paper and add another page or do I need to start something new? Writers have several choices when they think they are done."

Link: The teacher should instruct students that they will decide when they are finished each time they write and must choose to add to the sketch, to the words, add paper or start a new writing.

Share: After independent writing, students gather back on the rug. The teacher will want to have one or two examples of students' writing to share. First, the teacher will sum up what students have learned so far. "Writers, when you went to your writing space today, I notice that many of you looked at your finished piece of writing from yesterday and you asked yourself if you could add something important to the picture, or you could add some words to it. Then you asked yourself if you were finished. Some got another piece of paper to add to your story. I saw that \_\_\_\_\_ added some details to her story and when I asked her about it this is what she told me \_\_\_\_\_. That is what writers do when they are decided if they are finished. All of you could do that. I know that tomorrow and every day, you will look at your writing and decide to add more to your drawing, add more words, add more on another piece of paper or start a new story.

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Title of Mini-lesson: Lesson 4 - Writers Use and Take Care of the Tools They Need

Materials: Toolbox for each table, each containing pencils, markers, date stamp; boxes containing each table's writing folders; tray of new paper at each table.

Connection: The objective is for students to learn to become independent during the writing process. The teacher will have all materials ready and have examples of tools next to her. The teacher recognizes the topics that several students have been writing. After praising them, she says, "Today, I want to teach you one more thing that writers do. Writers have special writing tools. We take care of them."

Teaching: The teacher identifies the various tools that writers use. She shares how she has these on her desk to use when she writes. She shows the tools that will be at each writing station: pencil container, date stamp so that writers know when they wrote a piece, etc. She tells them that they will be dating their writing every day. The teacher points out the box for the folders and describes how folders will be distributed quickly. She shares how she will assign table monitors.

Active Engagement: The teacher might say, "Let's pretend that it is the end of mini-lesson time. I say, 'table monitors' and the table monitors will come and get the tools." The teacher may describe how she will let them know who is the table monitor and where materials are stored. After having students watch the table monitors to see if they can get their materials and put them in place quickly, students are sent to write.

Link: The teacher tells students that the system used that day will be the system used everyday in writer's workshop.

Share: After students come back to the carpet, the teacher comments about how putting up tools went that day. It is important to celebrate so that students see importance of caring for the writing tools.



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Title of Mini-lesson: Lesson 12 - Stretching Out and Writing Words

Materials:

Previously made teacher's sketch story across three pages

Markers

Tape

Connection: For the last several days, we have been learning how to write easy to read small moment stories. Today I want to show you one thing writers do to help them write easier to read words. Sometimes when we write words we only write down one or two letters for a word. Today I'm going to show you how writers stretch out some of their words and hear a lot of sounds in them. We say the word, write the sound, reread what we've written, and say the word again. There's a lot of going forward, then going backwards. Then going forward again, and so on until we've written all the sounds we can hear in the word.

Teaching: I have sketched a story across three pages about a small moment that happened in our class. Watch and listen as I turn the pages and tell the story...Like you do when you write. Page 1: *Ashlyn's Mom came to our room and talked to us about taking care of our bodies.* Page 2: *She brought some healthy snacks for us to eat.* Page 3: *Everyone liked the pineapple the best. It was naturally sweet!* That's my small moment story drawn across three pages. The first thing I'm going to do is label my pictures. Ashlyn's Mom came to our room. I'm going to label her Mom. I hear /m/, and I write m. What do I hear next? I hear /o/. I remember the word dog has the same sound in the middle, so I write o. I say the word again and I listen for the ending sound. What sound do you hear at the end of the word? I hear /m/ again, so I write m. Did you see how I kept saying the word, writing down what I heard? Then re-reading it and saying more of the word until I had all the sounds in the word written down. That's how writers stretch out words and make them easier to read.

Active Engagement: Let's see what else we can label (Students can use individual dry erase boards to practice hearing and writing sounds in words.) Let's look on page 2 and write snack. Say the word with me and listen to the beginning sound. What do you hear? /S/. Do you hear another sound blending with the /s/? What is it? It sounds like the beginning of the word nest. Write /sn/. Model the next step by repeating the word...snacks. Next I want you to turn and talk with a partner about the next sound you hear (Provide a minute for students to identify and write the sound they hear). Say snack. Ask students to remember the song we've been singing about Jack. Does Jack sound similar to snack? Let students name the letters to finish writing snack. Then they need to read snack with their finger and their eyes to see if it sounds and looks right.

Link: Writers today and everyday when you are writing your words in your small moment stories, make sure that you say the word once and write down what you hear in the beginning, and then say the word again and write down the other sounds you hear.

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Title of Mini -lesson: Lesson 16 - Introducing Booklets

Materials:

*The Paperboy* by Dav Pilkey  
Three page booklets  
Pencils

Connection: Today as writers we're going to learn how to go from writing one page stories to writing in books. When we read stories in books, there is almost always more than one page, and just like those exciting stories written across the pages we are going to begin writing like those authors.

Teaching: We have been reading a lot of picture books. One book we just read is *The Paperboy by Dav Pilkey*. In his story he could have written it all on one page... *The paperboy wakes up and he delivers his papers and then he comes home.* But he chose to write it as a book spanning across several pages. Demonstrate what Dav did in his book by reading the first three pages aloud.

Active Engagement: Remember the story we wrote about Ashlyn's Mom teaching us the nutrition lesson and we sketched the story across the pages? Let's look back at the pictures and labels we did together. Who can think of a sentence we could write on page one of our book? "Friday afternoon Ashlyn's Mom came to our room and talked to us about taking care of our bodies." Turn to page 2. What happened next? "She was carrying a big bag filled with healthy snacks for us to eat." Tell a friend what you might write under the picture on page 3. Have a couple students share their sentences. Just as earlier in the Writer's Workshop we told our small moment stories across our fingers. Writing your story across the pages is like that.

Link: Provide students with their new paper... blank booklets with several pages. Writers, today and everyday, if you are starting a new story, first tell it across your fingers. Then tell it across the pages of your booklet. Try different beginnings to make your story more interesting for the reader. Then sketch, label, and write across the pages of your book... just like Dav Pilkey.

### Letter and Sound Keys

A a a   	B b 	C c 	D d 	E e  
F f 	G g g  	H h 	I i i  	J j 
K k 	L l 	M m 	N n 	O o  
P p 	Q q q 	R r 	S s 	T t t 
U u  	V v 	W w 	X x 	Y y 
Z z 	th 	sh 	ch 	

## **ANCHOR CHARTS FOR LAUNCHING THE WRITER'S WORKSHOP**

### **How Writers Get Ideas**

- They look at what they are wearing
- They think back over their day
- They spark a memory by:
  - ❑ Looking around their world
  - ❑ Hearing a sound, word, or song
  - ❑ Smelling a scent
  - ❑ Touching a texture

### **Five Finger Plan**

- Tell it across your fingers (story)
- Tell it across your fingers again
- Sketch
- Outside story
- Inside story

### **What Writers Do When They THINK They're Done**

- They reread their piece
- They add words
- They fix confusing parts
- They start a new piece

### **Turn and Talk (already have established partners that come to the floor together)**

- Sit knee-to-knee, eye-to-eye
- Quickly choose who will go first
- Partner 1 talks then partner 2 talks
- Speaker speaks loudly enough to be heard but not too loudly
- Listener listens with a calm body
- Everyone takes responsibility their own listening

### **Gathering on the Carpet**

- Come when the teacher directs
- Know your spot
- Sit with you legs crossed and hands in your lap
- Be in your spot before the music ends

### **How to Be a Good Partner**

- Sit knee to knee
- Look eye to eye
- Be prepared to make a connection
- Wait for your turn to talk
- Use your calm body
- Be responsible and respectful

### **What We Do During Independent Writing Time?**

- Stay in our writing spots
- Think, picture in our mind, WRITE
- Let the pencil “talk” for the writer
- Respect other writers (“sh-h-h!”)

### **Getting Help During the Writer’s Workshop**

- Use the classroom Charts
- Use the Word Wall
- Use mentor author books
- Put colored help card on table
- Ask a neighbor
- Give yourself a moment to think

### **Good Writing Has....**

- Good details
- A sequence of events
- A beginning
- An ending